

## **IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A computer node for operating in a system comprising:  
a plurality of network clusters, wherein a number of network clusters comprise a plurality of computer nodes, the computer node comprising a synchronisation unit for comparing network timing information for a first network with network timing information for a second network and for communicating to the first network a sign of the difference between the first network timing information and the second network timing information to allow the first network to alter its network timing information using the sign of the difference wherein a network ~~clock-rate~~ timing difference between the first network and the second network ~~(12)~~ is reduced in sufficiently small predetermined step values to avoid loss of local synchronisation with other computer nodes in its network cluster.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Previously Presented) A computer node according to claim 1, wherein the network timing information corresponds to the phase of the network clock.
4. (Previously Presented) A computer node according to claim 1, wherein the synchronisation unit is arranged to provide the sign of the difference to the second network to allow the second network to alter its network timing information to allow the network timing difference between the first network and the second network to be reduced.
5. (Previously Presented) A computer node according to claim 1, wherein the computer node is arranged to be coupled to the first network.
6. (Previously Presented) A computer node according to claim 1, wherein the computer node is arranged to be coupled to the second network via a second computer node.
7. (Currently Amended) A system comprising a plurality of network clusters comprising:

a first network, a second network; and

a computer node having a synchronisation unit for comparing network timing information for the first network with network timing information for the second network and for communicating to the first network a sign of the difference between the first network timing information and the second network timing information such that a network clock rate of the first network is reduced in sufficiently small predetermined step values to avoid loss of local synchronisation with other computer nodes in its network cluster using the sign of the network timing difference between the first network and the second network.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 7, wherein the first network has a plurality of nodes and the first network timing information is used to maintain synchronisation of the plurality of nodes, wherein the change in network timing information is sufficiently small to allow the plurality of nodes to maintain synchronisation should one of the plurality of nodes not change its timing information in response to the sign of the difference communicated by the computer node.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for allowing synchronisation of a first network and a second network in a system comprising a plurality of network clusters, wherein a number of network clusters comprise a plurality of computer nodes, the method comprising:

comparing network timing information for the first network with network timing information for the second network; and

communicating to the first network a sign of the difference between the first network timing information and the second network timing information wherein a network ~~clock rate~~ timing difference between the first network and the second network is reduced in sufficiently small predetermined step values to avoid loss of local synchronisation with other computer nodes in its network cluster using the sign of the network timing difference between the first network and the second network.